New URL:
HTTP://GRAYSREEF.NOAA.GOV

If you capture a snapper or grouper with one of these external tags, and it is alive, please return it to the water so that it can continue providing data! If you can, please note the tag number and location of capture/ return and call 912-598-2345 to report the information.

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

Initiates Study to Track Fish Movement

National Marine Sanctuaries

Your help is needed!

Be on the lookout for tagged fish!

Beginning in May 2008, scientists at Gray's Reef will be tagging snapper and grouper with small tags (Figure 1). These tags emit a unique "ping" allowing researchers to track each fish. The tags are tracked by an array of receivers (Figure 2) that will be placed around Gray's Reef.

You will know if you've caught one of these fish because it will also have an external tag (Figure 3) attached near its dorsal fin (Figure 4).

Figure 1. Internal fish tag (credit VEMCO)

Figure 2. Acoustic receiver (credit VEMCO)

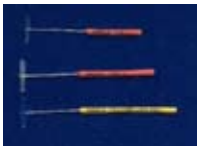

Figure 3. External tags – each fish will have one of these attached near their dorsal fin (credit Hallprint.com)

If you capture a snapper or grouper with one of these external tags, and it is alive, please return it to the water so that it can continue providing data! If you can, please note the tag number and location of capture/return and call 912-598-2345 to report the information. If the fish is no longer alive, we would greatly appreciate if you would return the internal tag (the tag will be found inside the fish's abdominal cavity).

Figure 4. External tag on grouper (photo taken in Florida Keys; credit: Ashley Knight, PIER)

If you happen to accidentally pull up one of the receiver arrays (Figure 5) please keep the array and call us at 912-598-2345. We will retrieve the unit and return it to the water in the appropriate location so that we can continue tracking fish in Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary.

Why are we tagging fish?

To better manage Gray's Reef it is important for us to know how fish use the reef, what habitats they prefer within the sanctuary and whether those preferences change over time. A better understood reef system leads to a better managed sanctuary which may ultimately lead to more abundant resources. The Gray's Reef fish tracking study using surgically implanted transmitters and a passive receiver array will continuously monitor fish movements. The project is planned to begin in 2008 to meet this critical research need.

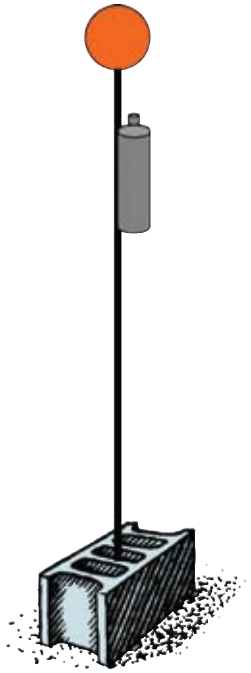

Figure 5. Schematic of receiver array. Fourteen of these units will be placed around Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary to listen for tagged fish. (credit Matt Kendall, NOAA)

Thank you for your assistance with this important research project!